

I am much obliged to you for your mention of the Dodo bones. Luckily Mr. Flower, the Antiquarian, is the father of the Mr. (I think now Captain) Flower who was so active in digging in the Mauritius; and as I am an ally of the father, we contrived to get a very large share of those valuable relics for our Museum. We were bound in honor so to do, as before this discovery a skull of that extinct bird which we preserved was the only one, except one in Copenhagen, in the world.

It was very vexatious at first, that discovering of new bones; every fresh discovery reducing the value and interest of our specimen, much as the discovery of the first husband reduces the value of the second in Tennyson's Poem of "Enoch Arden." But we made this out if it. I have to thank you also for mentioning our Museum to Dr. Stoliczka. I am in correspondence as to exchanges with Dr. Anderson of the Indian Museum, and I will put myself in communication with Dr. Stoliczka also.

If the Raja of Kédah should come upon another skeleton of the Sémang, I should be very glad of it. In the meantime it will be my business to make the best possible use of the one which we have.

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#### CAPTURE OF A SPECIMEN OF OPHIOPHAGUS ELAPS.

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[The following communication to the Curator of the Raffles Museum may be of interest.]

"I am very glad indeed to be able to send you another and a finer specimen of the Ophiophagus Elaps, a female measuring 11 feet 4 inches.

"The circumstances attending its capture are somewhat interesting. The man describes the snake as going along with its head elevated above the ground, and states that it came right at him; he wisely bolted and gave the alarm to the men in the fort; the brute then took up his position on the top of the Sentry box. I happened to be passing and heard the shouting, and was just in time to save the snake from being battered to pieces. Two plucky fellows volunteered to take it alive, but it was a risky thing to do, as immediately we approached the sentry box the snake

threw out its head from the folds and with distended neck shewed fight; however a noose at the end of a long stick was cleverly slipped over the neck whilst one of the men got hold of the tail; so we had him all fast without a blemish.

“The snake was then taken to the Godown and its venomous powers tested on three dogs.

“The first dog was slightly bitten in the shoulder at 10h. 34m., and an antidote believed in by the Chinese was applied. I enclose a specimen of the plant. The second dog was bitten very severely at 10.55, the snake holding on to the animal like a bull-dog to his dog. A strong solution of Chloral Hydrate was injected by the hypodermic Syringe, but without effect as the animal died in 15 minutes. The first dog not appearing much worse for the first bite, he was bitten again at 11.21 very severely in the nose and foot, the snake fastening on the latter place very tenaciously. The Chinese antidote was again applied; the plant was bruised in a small portion of water, the solution poured down the dog’s throat, and the benised leaves well rubbed into the wounds, but the dog sunk at once and died at 12.20, 1 hour 46 minutes after the first bite and 59 minutes after the second.

“The third dog was bitten at 11.19, at first very slightly and then severely in the foot; no antidote was used in this case, and this animal lived, some Chinaman having applied the actual centery to the wound in the foot; but the poor brute suffered very severely and I do not think it will recover. The Sélangor Natives recognise the Snake as the most dangerous known; they term it the “Tédong Sélah.”

“They all say it moves with the head lifted off the ground, and that it will not only attack, but pursue. An instance of this occurred some time ago; one of the European Officers in riding along one of the roads came on a very large Snake and it followed him, and he had to put his pony into a gallop to escape; he described it simply as a Cobra, but since reading of your paper in the first Number of the Straits Asiatic Society’s Journal he considers it was a specimen of the *Ophophiagus Elaps* of about 6 or 7 feet long. The perusal of the paper by you, and my seeing the two specimens here, proves beyond a doubt that the *Oph. Elaps* exists. In Northern Australia one about 7 feet in length bit a fine retriever of mine. I was then Government Resident of Port

Darwin and my daughter was riding with me, my mounted orderly in attendance. The orderly dismounted, and the snake after biting the dog went into a hollow place, from which he came out and would have bitten the man had he not dispatched him with his sabre.

“My daughter on seeing the specimen I now send you, at once recognised it as similar to the one which she saw at Port Darwin, the bright orange patch under the neck occurring in both cases.

The dog died in about 3 hours, after every care and the application of the Hypodermic Syringe by the Surgeon. The Natives here say the Oph. Elaps is not common; several of the intelligent and elderly men say, they have seen much larger specimens; one respectable man say he saw one a fathom larger than the one I send you which would be 19 feet.

“Enclosed is the Mate’s receipt for the Jar, which I trust will arrive safely as Captain Joyce promises to take charge of it. I also send you a small Python and a very venomous Snake termed the “*Tedong Matahari*,” said to attack men.

B. D.

*Klang, 20th November, 1878.*

#### THE OPHIOPHAGUS ELAPS

A correspondent states that the existence of this reptile in the Peninsula was proved in the early part of 1876, when a detachment of the Buffs were quartered at Kwala Kangsa. A specimen was killed and brought into the camp by some Malays; it was examined and identified by Surgeon-Major Davis. The Malays described it as the most formidable snake they are acquainted with, and related instances in which it had been known to chase men who had disturbed it, even taking to the water after them if they plunged into a river to escape from it. The Malay name given to the specimen caught at Kwala Kangsa was *Tedong Selah* (*Selah-Favre*.) There is an allusion to it in the *Marong Mahawampsa* (see Colonel Low’s translation, *Journal India Archipelago* vol. III. page 265) and the peculiar characteristic of this snake, namely that it will actually pursue a retreating foe, is introduced into the legend. “The boa feeling himself rather getting the worst of it, suddenly stirred, and shook